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Hong Kong's Growing Separatist Tendencies against China's Rise: Comparing Mainland and Hong Kong College Students' National Identities

Qin Pang[1] and Fan Jiang[2]

Abstract

Why have separatist sentiments increased in Hong Kong despite of China's growing economic attractiveness? This question is critical for China–Hong Kong relations. However, few studies have explored it from a comparative perspective. This study compares Hong Kong and mainland college students' national identities by making a series of interlocked surveys and interviews from 2012 to 2016. It shows that Hong Kong students have a much lower sociopolitical identity with China, which proves to be the primary cause for their separatist tendencies. Although they hold a comparably strong pan-Chinese economic identity, it does not strengthen their sociopolitical identity as it does for mainland students. This can be attributed to their post-materialist framework through which they are unlikely to believe that economic development alone can bring sociopolitical improvements. The findings imply that China faces serious difficulties in turning its economic strength into political charm in societies with strong post-materialist values.

Keywords

Separatist tendencies, national identity, Hong Kong, Mainland

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Introduction

Despite China's increasing economic power and accelerated integration with Hong Kong, the past several years have witnessed plummeting national identity and rising separatist sentiments among the Hong Kong public, notably among the post-80s and post-90s generation (Figure 1). For example, growing numbers of youngsters have deliberately resisted Hong Kong–mainland integration by launching and participating in large-scale social movements against public policies that aim to draw the local system closer to the mainland (Ramzy, 2019; *Washington Post*, 2012). Some extremists have even organised anti-China movements, such as "anti-Chinese tourists" and the "Hong Kong independence movement" (Hung, 2012; Ma, 2015). The 2014 "Occupy Central" movement and 2019 "Anti-Extradition Bill" protests also highlight growing separatist tendencies, albeit in the name of democracy and freedom.

Why have separatist tendencies grown in Hong Kong in spite of China's growing economic attractiveness? This question is critical for China–Hong Kong relations. It also contains strong implications regarding China's relations with other offshore Chinese societies, such as Taiwan, in which vibrant anti-Chinese sentiments have erupted despite accelerated economic integration with China (Li, 2014). China's growing economic might has generated heated discussions concerning the extent to which it will change China's relations with others, for example, whether China's rising economic and military power will present a threat to the international order (Bernstein and Munro, 1997; Gertz 2002; Johnston 2003; Kirshner 2012). However, scholars and observers frequently focus on China's growth in economic might and its military build-up and assume that such increased power will result in compliance and attractiveness to others, including the peripheral Chinese societies (Halper, 2010; Jacques, 2009; Kurlantzick, 2008). Rising separatist tendencies in Hong Kong suggest that such an assumption may be an over-simplification. Much still remains unclear regarding whether and to what extent China can transform its economic might into overall attractiveness.

This study investigates this question by comparing national identity and perceptions of China's economic rise in Hong Kong with those in the mainland, where China's rise is observed as having stimulated strong patriotism (*Pew Global Attitude Project*, 2008; *The Economist, 2009*). It focuses on the post-80s and post-90s elite college students in the two societies. In Hong Kong, this cohort mostly holds particularly weak national identity and actively participates in various separatist movements (Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, 2010; Zheng et al., 2014). By contrast, their mainland counterparts are one of the most actively nationalist groups, with national pride running high (Hoffmann and Larner, 2013; Wasserstrom, 2005). Moreover, the two cohorts represent future political, social, and economic elites in both societies; therefore, their national identities have strong policy implications for China's relations with Hong Kong.

This study shows that Hong Kong students have a much weaker sociopolitical identity with China than their mainland counterparts, which proves to be the primary cause of their separatist tendencies. Although they exhibit a relatively strong pan-Chinese economic identity (hereafter pan-economic identity, this identity covers various aspects related with China's economic performance such as "economic

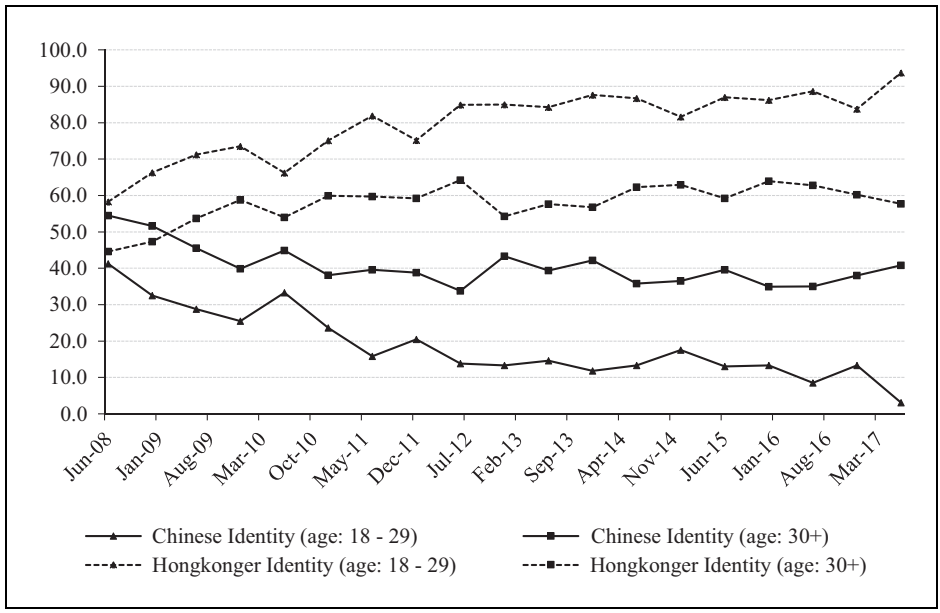

Figure 1. Identity trends of different age groups in Hong Kong, 2008–2017. *Source*: Public Opinion Program, University of Hong Kong (POP), "People's Ethnic Identity," accessed 30 November 2017.

development" and "science and technology") in comparison with their mainland counterparts, this pan-economic identity does not strengthen their sociopolitical identity as it does among their mainland counterparts. This can be attributed to Hong Kong students' post-materialist framework, through which they are much less likely to ascribe China's economic growth to the Chinese state or to believe that economic development can bring a better sociopolitical future for China. The findings imply that China faces serious difficulties in turning its economic strength into assimilating force for democratic societies where post-materialist values dominate. Hong Kong's separatist tendencies will probably grow stronger in the coming years.

Defining Separatist Tendencies and National Identity in the Context of China–Hong Kong Relations

"Separatist tendencies" in Hong Kong refers to the propensity of Hong Kong citizens to distance themselves from mainland China. It is different from general "separatism" or "schism" which claims to secede from a larger group and to form an independent state (Leeuwen and Mashuri, 2013; Sani, 2008; Sani and Reicher, 1998; Sani and Todman, 2002), in that it is more about resistance to "integration" with the mainland for the majority, although excessive separatism does exist in a tiny fraction of the population. For example, Brian Leung, a student from The University of Hong Kong (HKU), has

called for "Hong Kong People Deciding Their Own Fate," on the February issue of *Undergrad*, the publication of the student union in HKU, in 2014. Despite the excessive thought, the majority of Hong Kong society does not consider seceding from China as a viable option, due to its heavy socioeconomic dependence on Mainland. Thus, separatist tendencies, in general, considered "*defensive*" in nature (Cheung, 2014).

There have been separatist tendencies in Hong Kong since the 1970s, when a local identity was formed that was based on local residents' common life experiences under British colonial rule (Johnson, 1994; Ma and Fung, 2007). Before Hong Kong's handover in 1997, most Hongkongers placed their local identity high above their identity with the mainland, which was believed to be culturally and economically inferior to Hong Kong (Johnson, 1994; Ma and Fung, 1999; Pun and Yee, 2003). Since 1997, Hong Kong residents have begun to accept a dual identity as both "Hongkongers" and "Chinese," and thus separatist tendencies reduced (Ma and Fung, 2007). Such trend reached its peak during 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. However, it did not last long. Since 2009, as mentioned in the "Introduction" section, national identity began to plummet while separatist tendencies have soared (see Figure 1). This can be seen from growing resistance to economic integration with China, for example, the strong opposition to both multi-entry permits for Shenzhen citizens and a high-speed rail link to China. There has been increasing resistance to political influence from the Chinese state, as evidenced by the deadlock about the 2017 Chief Executive Officer Election reform, which fuelled the 2014 Umbrella Movement.

National identity in this study is defined as an individual's perception and emotional attachment to his/her nation-state including such factors as "a named human population sharing a historic territory, common myths and historical memoires, a public culture, a common economy and legal rights and duties for all members" (Smith, 1993:13; for other definitions, see Dahbour, 2002). It is generally divided by an "ethnic" and a "civic" line in which ethnic identity refers to identification with the nation state's fixed cultural markers and bloodlines and civic identity refers to identification with more fluid and achievable national traits, such as political institutions and norms (Brubaker, 1992). Such a typology, however, does not fit in with national identity in Hong Kong. Hong Kong has more than 150-year experience of separation from mainland China, and it has developed its own local variety of contemporary culture (Lau, 2000). Besides, it does not share common political institutions and norms with the mainland under the "One country, Two systems" provision.

Considering these, we divide national identity into three dimensions: cultural, sociopolitical, and pan-economic identity. We devise cultural identity as covering not only ethnicity identity such as national history and traditional culture but also contemporary Chinese culture for which mainland and Hong Kong students may have distinctive views. We expand civic identity into a sociopolitical identity which involves identification with not only political institutions but also social systems including social fairness and justice. Such expansion is based on the consideration that increasing social interactions between the two societies should have growing importance in shaping Hong Kong's citizens' national identity (Ma, 2015; Shen, 2014). We use pan-economic identity to cover identification with China's economic and international performance such as economic

development, international influence, and military power. Although this dimension is often ignored in previous studies of national identity, we believe it is of fundamental importance given Hong Kong's close economic ties with the mainland have become a key aspect of its Chinese membership (Shen and Luo, 2013). As China continues its economic rise, this part of Hong Kong's identity will become even more salient. As this shows, the national identity here for the Hong Kong students is, in nature, their perceptions and evaluations of China's cultural, sociopolitical, and pan-economic side.

Review of National Identity and Causes for Separatist Tendencies in Hong Kong

National identity in Hong Kong has received wide-ranging attention given its constant fluctuations following the return of Hong Kong's sovereignty to China. The previous literature shows that the national identity of Hong Kong's citizens has amorphous and hybrid features. Their cultural identity is strong, and their view of ancient Chinese history is largely in line with the mainland Chinese view (Siu, 1996). However, their attitudes towards the Chinese state, particularly the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), tend to be negative (Fu et al., 1999; Liu, 1999). Their national identity is sometimes characterised as "liberal patriotism" (Chan and Chan, 2014). In the socio-economic realm, prior to 1997, they perceived the mainland as economically backward and socially chaotic, but this perception has changed with the growth of the mainland economy (Lee and Chan, 2005; Mathews et al., 2008).

Separatist tendencies in Hong Kong have typically been explained from either a Primordialist or Instrumentalist perspective. Scholars taking the Primordialist approach view weak cultural identity as the key and argue that Hong Kong's distinctive colonial experience sets Hong Kong citizens apart from their mainland counterparts by means of language (Mandarin vs. Cantonese in speaking and simplified vs. traditional characters in writing), social customs, and values (Lau, 2000). These cultural differences have become more pronounced in the context of frequent economic and social communication between the two places (Chan, 2014). For example, the English language has been regarded as a habitus of Hong Kong society and an important constituent of Hong Kong identity. The intrusion of Mandarin into education has incurred strong resistance among Hong Kong citizens (Chan, 2002).

The Instrumentalist scholars focus on differing sociopolitical values and argue that Hong Kong society generally disapproves of the Chinese authoritarian political system. Fung (2001) notes that the downfall of Chinese national identity from 1998 onwards has been caused by Hong Kong citizens' resistance towards the encroachment of national discourses on their local identity. Ma (2015) believes that Beijing's tightened political control has aggravated anti-China sentiments. Moreover, the Chinese state's "mainlandisation" efforts have exceeded Hong Kong society's limits for assimilation and thus have backfired (Yew and Kwong, 2014). The new national education programmes supported by the Chinese state and promoting blind patriotism, for example, have provoked strong resistance because they are seen as eroding Hong Kong's core political values and political "distinctiveness" from the mainland.

The previous literature shows that Hong Kong's weak national identity, whether cultural or political, is the key to separatist tendencies. Considering that national identity in mainland China is strong, we will explore Hong Kong's separatist tendencies by comparing national identity between the two places. We will focus on three questions: (1) What is the strength of cultural, sociopolitical, and pan-economic national identity in Hong Kong in comparison with the mainland? (2) Which dimension has contributed to the rising separatist tendencies in Hong Kong? (3) Why is China's growing economic power unable to effectively bridge the separatist tendencies?

Methodology

Research Design and Data Collection

We use an interlocked three-step method to collect data. First, we conduct a national identity survey (hereafter NIS), in Beijing, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong during March and April 2013 to collect data regarding national identity and separatist tendencies. After an initial comparison, we find that Hong Kong students, compared with their peers on the mainland, have comparable pan-economic identity but extremely low sociopolitical identity. Second, during November 2014 to July 2015, we conduct in-depth semi-structured interviews (hereafter ISSIs) with 31 Hong Kong students regarding their perception of China's rise, aiming to explore why their sociopolitical identity remains weak in spite of their strong pan-economic identity. Finally, in December 2015, we conduct two comparative follow-up surveys (FUSs) in Hong Kong and Guangzhou to test our findings from the interviews. The following introduces the three steps in details.

National Identity Survey. During March and April 2013, we drew 1,297 college students from four elite universities in Beijing – Peking University (北京大学, *Beijing Daxue*), Tsinghua University (清华大学, *Qinghua Daxue*), People's University of China (中国人民大学, *Zhongguo Renmin Daxue*), and Foreign Affairs University (外交学院, *Waijiao Xueyuan*) – to participate in our survey and collected 1,199 valid questionnaires. (Prior to the survey, we ran a small-scaled pilot study from around 50 students in Guangdong and Beijing.) We choose them as they are considered as holding enhanced political, economic, and social opportunities to become China's future political elite members (Li and Bachman, 1989; Li, 1994). Their differences with Hong Kong students, therefore, will have strong implications for future mainland–Hong Kong relations.

We adopted a stratified random sampling method. In each university, we selected approximately 250–330 students and invited them to fill out the questionnaires in chosen classrooms in the teaching buildings on campus. Although this strategy was only semi-random and may therefore result in some sampling biases, such as missing those who are not on campus, the sample remains acceptable due to the close resemblance between the sample and the population. For example, in Peking University, during the academic year of 2013–2014, there were about 45 per cent female students, 24.33 per cent CCP members, 10.07 per cent ethnic minority students among the undergraduate students. In comparison, our three Peking University samples in 2011, 2012, and 2013 had 52 per

Table 1. Sample statistics in Beijing, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong in NIS.

Variable	Description	Mean		
		BJ (n = 1,186)	GZ (n = 298)	HK (n = 563)
Gender	Male = 0, female = 1	0.47	0.51	0.63[a]
Age	1 = "17–20," 2 = "21–24," 3 = "25–29," 4 = "30 and above"	–	–	1.57
Nationality	Han nationality = 0, minority nationalities = 1	0.07	0.06	–
Education level	BJ and GZ: undergraduate = 0, postgraduate = 1; HK: 1 = "lower than associate degree," 2 = "associate degree," 3 = "bachelor and above"	0.19	0.22	2.49
Political membership[b]	CCP = 3, CCYL = 2, Others = 1	2.18	2.07	–
Foreign popular culture products consumption	1 = "never," 2 = "seldom," 3 = "sometimes," 4 = "often," 5 = "frequently"	2.86	–	2.95
English proficiency	1 = "poor," 2 = "mediocre," 3 = "fair," 4 = "good," 5 = "excellent"	3.34	–	3.22

Note: BJ = Beijing; HK = Hong Kong; CCP = Chinese Communist Party; CCYL = Chinese Communist Youth League; GZ = Guangzhou; NIS = national identity survey.

[a]The higher proportion of female sample can be explained by higher percentages of female student population in Hong Kong's universities. According to the Hong Kong Women's Commission and University Grants Committee (UGC), among the students joining the course granted by UGC from 2012 to 2013, the percentage of female students applying for assistant bachelor degree is 59%, bachelor degree is 53.3%, and master degree is 60%. For details, please refer to http://www.women.gov.hk/download/research/HKWomen2013 (November 2016).

[b]In Beijing sample, the proportion of CCP and CCYL members is 7.57% and 66.55%; in Guangzhou sample, 6.67% and 83.67%.

cent, 49 per cent, and 43.8 per cent female students; 23.4 per cent, 24.5 per cent, and 27.3 per cent CCP members; and 11 per cent, 8.8 per cent, and 7.6 per cent ethnic minority students. Information obtained from the other universities indicated similar, small differences between the actual student body and our cohorts. The general profile of the participants from the four Beijing universities is reported in Table 1.

In addition to Beijing, we also collected data from a smaller sample in Guangzhou for reference. We adopted similar sampling procedures and chose 326 students from three local elite universities: Sun Yet-san University (中山大学, *Zhongshan Daxue*), South China Science and Technology University (华南理工大学, *Huanan Ligong Daxue*), and Guangdong University of Foreign Affairs (广东外语外贸大学, *Guangdong Waiyu Waimao Daxue*). We obtained 299 valid questionnaires, for a response rate of 91.71 per

Table 2. General profile of the interviewees.

	Number of Interviewees		Number of Interviewees
University		Gender	
HKU	10	Male	18
PolyU	7	Female	13
CityU	5		
CUHK	9		
Major		Grade	
Finance	4	Sophomore	3
Marketing	1	Junior	6
Accounting	3	Senior	7
Management	3	Post-graduate	1
Engineering	1	Unreported	14
Social Policy	1		
Unreported	18		

Note: HKU = The University of Hong Kong; PolyU = Hong Kong Polytechnic University; CUHK = Chinese University of Hong Kong; CityU = City University of Hong Kong.

cent. Data for Guangzhou were chosen based on the assumption that Guangzhou is not only geographically but also social-economically and culturally close to Hong Kong; therefore, comparing national identity among Beijing, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong should reveal a more balanced and representative picture concerning the national identity differences between mainland and Hong Kong students.

Data regarding Hong Kong students' national identity and separatist tendencies were collected at the end of 2012 (Professor Nicholas Thomas from City University of Hong Kong has kindly shared with us his data set of Hong Kong students collected by him and his students). There were 563 valid questionnaires, and a general profile of the sample is reported in Table 1. In this survey, Hong Kong students' national identity is measured by the same indicators as those used in Beijing and Guangzhou. Besides, extra questions are used to measure their separatist tendencies (see "Separatist Tendencies" section for details).

In-Depth Semi-Structured Interviews. These interviews were conducted from November 2014 to July 2015 immediately after the Occupy Central movement ended. Whereas some interviewees reported participating in the movement, others said not. Some claimed frequently going back to the mainland to visit relatives or short trip; but a few stated that they had grown up abroad and had travelled to the mainland very few times. However, they all claimed to have reasonably good knowledge about mainland China through either direct visits or mass media. The general profile of the interviewees is listed in Table 2.

During the interviews, we deliberately focused on questions concerning the students' perception of China's economic rise and China's sociopolitical and cultural characteristics. For example, we asked them about their perception and evaluation of China's economic development. We solicited their opinions about China's political institutions,

Table 3. Separatist tendencies of Hong Kong students in NIS.

Self-identity	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Hongkonger	306	54.45
Chinese Hongkonger	125	22.24
Hong Kong Chinese	39	6.94
Chinese	92	16.37
Total	562	100

Note: NIS: national identity survey.

social systems, and traditional culture. We also invited them to express the differences between mainland China and Hong Kong and encouraged them to freely discuss their experiences of China and of mainland Chinese people. As our purpose is to explore their separatist tendencies, we did not make similar interviews with the mainland students. (In fact, we have interviewed a few mainland students about their perceptions of the Occupy Central Movement in Hong Kong. We gave it up quickly as these topics tended to be sensitive.)

Follow-Up Survey. To test our findings from the interviews, in December 2015, about one year after the Occupy Central movement, we invited 530 students from Hong Kong (HKU, PolyU, CUHK, and CityU) and 280 students from four universities in Guangzhou (Sun Yet-san University, South China Science and Technology University, South China Normal University, and Jinan University) to participate in the surveys regarding their perception of China's economic rise and sociopolitical development. The response rate in Hong Kong and Guangzhou is 94.15 per cent and 95.17 per cent, respectively (see Table 1A in Appendix 1). The sampling procedures for the two surveys are similar to the first round of survey (NIS) mentioned previously.

Indicators and Measurements

Separatist Tendencies. Separatist tendencies is measured by the extent to which Hong Kong students put their Hong Kong identity above their Chinese identity, that is, to what extent they consider themselves a Hongkonger vis-a-vis Chinese. Separatist tendencies here do not contain the behavioural intention for secessionist moves because our study concerns the student group as a whole rather than some extreme activists. It is the "psychological distance from the larger group" that is our focus. The students were required to choose from the four self-perceived identity categories – "Hongkonger" (香港人, *Xianggang ren*), "Chinese Hongkonger" (中国的香港人, *Zhongguo de Xianggang ren*), "Hong Kong Chinese" (香港的中国人, *Xianggang de Zhongguo ren*), and "Chinese" (中国人, *Zhongguo ren*) (see Table 3). Among them, "Hongkonger" means sheer preference for their local identity over a national identity, suggesting the highest separatist tendencies. "Chinese Hongkonger" and "Hong Kong Chinese" show an overlap of local and national identity. The former indicates stronger preference for the

local identity and therefore higher separatist tendencies. "Chinese" indicates the full embracement of a Chinese identity and is associated with the lowest separatist tendencies.

National Identity. National identity is measured by the students' pride in China's achievements in eleven domains (see Table 4). Regarding the three dimensions of national identity, sociopolitical identity is measured by their pride in "political institutions," "social security," and "social fairness among all classes"; cultural identity is gauged by "contemporary arts and literature," "traditional culture," and "Chinese history"; and pan-economic identity is assessed by "economic development", "science and technology", "military power", "international influence," and "sports achievement." ("Sports achievements" especially those in the international sports competition are widely seen as part of China's international influence.) The Cronbach's α for the three identity scales are all over 0.70 (see Table 4), indicating adequate internal reliability. (Cronbach's α is generally used as a measurement of internal consistency of a psychometric instrument. In other words, it measures how well a set of variables or items measures a single, one-dimensional latent aspect of individuals.) While separatist tendencies emphasise on a general orientation of one's national/local identity, national identity here mainly measures a respondent's perceptions and evaluations of China's three specific/concrete aspects that contribute to their general national orientation.

Attitudes about China's Economic Achievements and Sociopolitical Problems. This part is measured in the FUSs by the students' expressed agreement regarding the four statements in Table 8. Because they are not indicators for a single variable, we do not check their validity and reliability.

Findings and Discussion

Comparing National Identities between Mainland China and Hong Kong

By comparing the two (see Table 4), we find that the Hong Kong group shows only a small gap with their Beijing and Guangzhou counterparts in pride of China's economic development and international influence. The average mean of pan-economic identity is 4.74 in Beijing, 4.89 in Guangzhou, and 4.50 in Hong Kong (Table 4). To our surprise, the Hong Kong students display even greater pride in China's "science and technology" and "sports achievements" than their Beijing counterparts, which clearly suggests that they appreciate China's rise in economic importance and international status, and take pride in it along with their mainland peers.

However, Hong Kong students have significantly lower sociopolitical identity. As Table 4 shows, their average mean of sociopolitical identity is only 2.61, compared to 3.33 and 3.40 in Beijing and Guangzhou, respectively. Their pride in China's political institutions is extremely low, although the two mainland groups' evaluations of China's sociopolitical features are not high either. As Table 4 shows, the mean value for political institution in Hong Kong is 2.86, compared to 3.94 and 4.03 in Beijing and Guangzhou,

Table 4. Descriptive statistics and Cronbach's α of national identity's three dimensions.

National identity	Do you feel proud about China in the following aspects? (1–7 is "not proud at all" to "strongly proud")	Beijing			Guangzhou			Hong Kong		
		Mean	SD	α	Mean	SD	α	Mean	SD	α
Sociopolitical identity	Political institutions	3.94***	1.28	0.79	4.03***	1.39	0.82	2.86	1.35	0.81
	Social security	3.24***	1.33		3.23***	1.30		2.69	1.26	
	Social fairness among all classes	2.81***	1.31		2.93***	1.42		2.27	1.28	
	Average	3.33***	1.31		3.40***	1.37		2.61	1.30	
Pan-economic identity	Economic development	5.09***	1.11	0.77	5.02***	1.12	0.73	4.77	1.20	0.81
	Science and technology	4.33*	1.27		4.36	1.29		4.42	1.23	
	Military power	4.61***	1.08		4.75***	1.04		4.23	1.16	
	International influence	4.88***	1.15		5.07***	1.06		4.15	1.68	
	Sports achievement	4.78***	1.35		5.23***	1.18		4.95	1.30	
	Average	4.74***	1.19		4.89***	1.14		4.50	1.31	
Cultural identity	Contemporary art and literature	6.12***	0.99	0.74	5.60***	1.14	0.74	4.80	1.30	0.73
	Traditional culture	5.55*	1.26		5.56***	1.24		5.43	1.24	
	Chinese history	6.15***	0.97		6.16***	1.00		5.45	1.29	
	Average	5.94***	1.07		5.77***	1.13		5.23	1.28	

Note: *T*-test of the differences between Beijing/Guangzhou and Hong Kong are significant at the $^{*}p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$ level.

respectively. They also have comparatively lower cultural identity, although Hong Kong students' pride in "traditional Chinese culture" is similar to that of their peers. Their mean values for pride in "Contemporary Chinese arts and literature" and "Chinese history" are 4.80 and 5.45, compared with 6.12 and 6.15 in Beijing and 5.60 and 6.16 in Guangzhou, respectively. Nevertheless, differences in their cultural identity with the mainland groups in general are smaller than the differences in sociopolitical identity.

We find that Hong Kong students exhibit comparably strong pan-economic identity but comparatively weak sociopolitical and cultural identity. We arrive, then, at the next question: Which national identity dimension(s) is (are) most closely related with rising separatist tendencies in Hong Kong?

Linking National Identities and Separatist Tendencies in Hong Kong

We examine the relations between the Hong Kong students' three dimensions of national identity and their separatist tendencies by building two multinomial logistic regression (mlogit) models. Both multinomial logistic regression and ordinal logistic regression (ologit) can be used to analyse the case here. While mlogit assumes the dependent variable contains different categories, ologit assumes it contains different categories which have something in common but are different in order, for example, different educational levels. We choose mlogit because we use the comparatively neutral "Chinese Hongkonger" as the base group, and its comparison with the two extreme groups "Hongkongers" and "Chinese" separately can be seen as two separate comparisons with different groups, rather than one comparison of several groups in different degrees. Although the four different identity categories, in definition, should contain common characters, their commonalities may not strictly follow the model of different education levels (which can be seen as single-dimensioned). They may contain several dimensions such as local identity and attitudes towards China, and so on. This could make things very complicated. Considering this, we choose mlogit instead.

We set three national identity dimensions as independent variables and separatist tendencies as the dependent variable, with six demographic and social background variables, such as gender, age, income, and English proficiency, as control variables (see Table 5). Mlogit regression was chosen because separatist tendencies, the dependent variable, is categorical in nature. "Separatist tendencies" is divided into four categories: "Hongkonger", "Chinese Hongkonger", "Hong Kong Chinese," and "Chinese." In the Mlogit models, we set the relatively neutral "Chinese Hongkonger" as the base group and merge "Hong Kong Chinese" and "Chinese" into a single group (because the number of "Hong Kong Chinese" students is so small that the regression results comparing this group and the base group are not reliable). Our mlogit model includes two logistic regression models with the following common reference group:

$$\ln \frac{[P(Y = y_1)|X]}{[P(Y = y_0)|X]} = \alpha_1 + \sum_{k=1}^{K} \beta_{k_1} X_k$$

Table 5. The mlogit regression models for separatist tendencies.

	Hongkonger	Hong Kong Chinese/Chinese
Gender	0.093 (0.239)	−0.055 (0.283)
Age	−0.030 (0.188)	0.338 (0.216)
Education degree	0.177 (0.163)	0.321 (0.199)
Income	−0.008 (0.186)	−0.111 (0.216)
Foreign products consumption	−0.040 (0.112)	−0.002 (0.131)
English proficiency	0.031 (0.131)	−0.207 (0.154)
Pan-economic identity	−0.493** (0.151)	−0.109 (0.181)
Cultural identity	−0.233 (0.133)	0.065 (0.164)
Sociopolitical identity	0.153 (0.118)	0.438** (0.134)
Constant	3.512*** (0.904)	−1.551 (1.098)
Observations	542	542

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$, the Pseudo R^2 is 0.072.

$$\ln \frac{[P(Y = y_2)|X]}{[P(Y = y_0)|X]} = \alpha_2 + \sum_{k=1}^{K} \beta_{k_2} X_k$$

We then examine how "Hongkonger" ($Y = y_1$), "Hong Kong Chinese" ($Y = y_2$), and "Chinese" differ from "Chinese Hongkongers" ($Y = y_0$) in the three national identity dimensions. The results are shown in Table 5. For a better understanding of the results, we will first interpret the meaning of the four separatist categories. Both "Hongkongers" and "Chinese Hongkongers" can be understood as separatists because they place their local identity above national identity. "Hongkongers" are seen as extremists and "Chinese Hongkongers" are moderates who recognise some convergence of Hong Kong and Chinese identity. "Hong Kong Chinese" and "Chinese" are national loyalists, especially the latter. As Table 5 shows, the coefficient of sociopolitical identity is not significant for "Hongkonger," but it is significantly positive for "Chinese" ($\beta = .4438$, $p < .01$). This means that moderate separatists ("Chinese Hongkongers") and extremists ("Hongkongers") share similarly weak sociopolitical identities and there are no significant differences between them in this regard. However, their sociopolitical identities are significantly weaker than those of national loyalists ("Hong Kong Chinese/Chinese"). The coefficient of pan-economic identity is significantly negative for "Hongkongers" ($\beta = -.493$, $p < .01$), but not significant for "Chinese." This means that moderate separatists ("Chinese Hongkongers") have a significantly stronger pan-economic identity than extremists ("Hongkongers") but a pan-economic identity similar to that of national loyalists ("Hong Kong Chinese/Chinese"). Moreover, the coefficient of cultural identity is not significant for "Hongkongers" or "Chinese," suggesting that it is unrelated to separatist tendencies, matching our expectations.

The results suggest that Hong Kong's sociopolitical identity conflict with China is the primary cause of its growing separatist tendencies because it is closely associated with

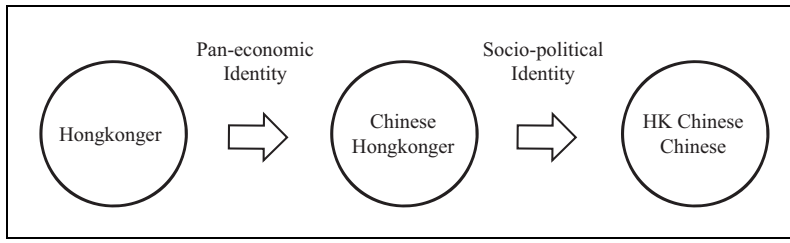

Figure 2. National identity and separatist tendency categories.

the gap between separatists and Chinese loyalists. This also echoes the previous descriptive finding that the sociopolitical identity difference is the strongest between the two places. Pan-economic identity is related to variations between extremist and moderate separatists. Moderate separatists tend to have a stronger pan-economic identity than extremists. This means that China's growing economic strength should produce an ideational spill-over effect upon the students' self-perceived relations with China. However, such effect is limited as it only facilitates the transformation from extremists to moderates but fails to bridge the sociopolitical identity conflict that causes general separatist tendencies (Figure 2).

Considering that weak sociopolitical identity is the key to rising separatist tendencies in Hong Kong, why China's rise has not strengthened Hong Kong students' sociopolitical identity? In other words, why does the sociopolitical identity of Hong Kong students remain weak despite their strong pan-economic identity? The following section will examine the question by comparing Hong Kong students' national identity structure with that of the mainland group, who, as was shown in the "Comparing National Identities between Mainland China and Hong Kong" section, has a similar pan-economic identity but stronger sociopolitical identity.

Comparing National Identity Structures

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is employed to study the structure of national identity in Hong Kong and mainland China. EFA is a statistical method commonly used to explore the relationships among a set of items by uncovering their underlying structure. It can reveal whether several variables are decided by one common latent factor such that they co-vary in the same direction or are influenced by different factors such that they vary in different ways. EFA is used here to test whether the three dimensions of national identity in the two places – and, in particular, pan-economic identity and sociopolitical identity – have similar relations.

The principal-factor method (one type of EFA) and orthogonal rotation were conducted on the NIS samples from Beijing, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong, and the factors with Eigenvalues greater than 1 were retained as effective components. The results show that the Hong Kong and mainland groups do have different national identity structures. As Table 6 shows, although all the items of pan-economic and cultural identity load on to the same factor (factor 1) for the Hong Kong group, sociopolitical identity items are

Table 6. Exploratory factor analysis of national identity in Beijing and Hong Kong.

National Identity	Measurement items	BJ ($N = 1{,}186$)		GZ ($N = 298$)		HK ($N = 563$)	
		Factor1	Factor2	Factor1	Factor2	Factor1	Factor2
Sociopolitical identity	Political institutions	0.69	0.18	0.74	0.19	0.18	0.69
	Social security	0.71	0.01	0.75	0.03	0.12	0.74
	Social fairness among all classes	0.70	−0.04	0.76	−0.10	0.01	0.73
Pan-economic identity	Economic development	0.52	0.33	0.49	0.41	0.60	0.35
	Science and technology	0.53	0.29	0.57	0.25	0.59	0.36
	Military power	0.52	0.30	0.49	0.35	0.48	0.40
	International influence	0.59	0.38	0.50	0.32	0.61	0.26
	Sports achievement	0.43	0.34	0.14	0.46	0.59	0.23
Cultural identity	Contemporary art and literature	0.08	0.67	0.02	0.59	0.54	0.16
	Traditional culture	0.16	0.61	0.12	0.69	0.70	−0.08
	Chinese history	0.08	0.69	0.06	0.68	0.69	0.00
Eigenvalues of factors		3.65	1.11	3.51	1.47	3.77	1.30

Note: BJ = Beijing; HK = Hong Kong; GZ = Guangzhou. Due to missing values not all valid questionnaires could be included in the factor analysis.

decided by the other factor (factor 2, see Table 6), suggesting that pan-economic identity in Hong Kong is largely independent of sociopolitical identity and that the Hong Kong group tends to view the pan-economic and sociopolitical sides of China as distinctive and separate.

For the Beijing and Guangzhou group, however, all the items of sociopolitical identity and pan-economic identity load on to the same factor (factor 1), indicating that the two identities go together for Beijing students. (Our Guangzhou sample produces a similar structure, except that one of pan-economic identity items, "sports achievements," loads on factor 2 and co-varies more with cultural identity rather than with sociopolitical identity.) In other words, the Beijing and Guangzhou samples tend to merge the two together, which contrasts with the Hong Kong sample. Such structural differences help explain why the mainland and Hong Kong group share similar pan-economic identity, but the Hong Kong group's sociopolitical identity is much weaker.

Post-Materialist Perception of China's Rise

How can we explain the disjunction between pan-economic and sociopolitical identities in Hong Kong? Our in-depth interviews with 31 Hong Kong students reveal that this disjunction may arise because Hong Kong students take a post-materialist view of China's economic growth and sociopolitical status. Post-materialism refers to a set of values that emphasise individual self-expression and personal freedom (Inglehart, 1971, 2008). It was first postulated in the early 1970s by Ronald Inglehart, who after extensive survey research on selected Western European societies, argued that value orientations in

post-industrial societies have been gradually transformed from materialist values emphasising economic well-being and safety to post-materialist values that stress personal freedom and self-expression. This notion gives priority to greater citizen input in government decisions, an ideal of humanitarian society, and a clean environment, and accordingly, it opposes prioritising economic growth and social stability over environmental protection and civil liberties (Inglehart et al., 2004). As Table 7 shows, post-materialism is more widely accepted in Hong Kong than in mainland China.

During our interviews, the Hong Kong students displayed strong post-material value orientations. For example, many showed discontent with China's restrictions on civil liberties, particularly those involving freedom both of press and speech. One student from HKU said, "Each time when I get back to the mainland, I find I cannot get access to many websites, nor can I use Facebook or Twitter." Another one from PolyU said, "Although I learn from the textbook in middle school that the Chinese people can express grievances and discontent with their government by petition, they are, in fact, heavily controlled by the government and it is difficult for them to voice their appeals." The students also expressed apprehension about China's social disparity. One student from HKU commented, "Social disparity is really huge in China. I have been to Yunnan province once, and I saw many poverty-stricken villagers and was very much surprised." Another student from CUHK said, "People at the bottom of the (mainland) society cannot share the economic prosperity. . . . Those migrant labors I met toil so much but do not have equal medical care or education benefits for their children." These findings are in line with the 2013 World Values Survey in Hong Kong, which shows that post-materialist values are dominant among educated young people (see Table 7) (Chiu, 2010).

Accordingly, the Hong Kong students attach less importance to economic growth and tend to separate it from the state. During our interviews regarding the mainland's economic development, most expressed recognition of it. Several even claimed that China's top-tiered cities, such as Shanghai and Guangzhou, were close to Hong Kong or even surpassed Hong Kong in some aspects. However, few of the interviewees connected China's economic achievement with the Chinese state. Only two did so, but these interviewees believed that the state played a negative role in China's economic development. For instance, one student from CityU said, "The (Chinese government's) GDP target, as I see it, is just a vanity project (政绩工程, *zhengji gongcheng*)." The other, from HKU, claimed that "local governments are short-sighted. They destroyed the environment and wasted natural resources for some small material gains."

Our FUSs in Hong Kong show that only 30.25 per cent of Hong Kong students agree that "China's economic development should mostly be attributed to the Chinese government." The majority either express "no idea" (approximately 40 per cent) or disagree with the statement (30 per cent, see Table 8), which contrasts with the 80.6 per cent of the mainland students who agree with the statement. Moreover, only 45.69 per cent Hong Kong students agree that "China's development in science and technology should mostly be attributed to the Chinese government," but that number reaches 67.7 per cent on the mainland (see Table 8). This may be due to that the mainland students are developmentalism-oriented, that is, they tend to believe that economic development, and more broadly speaking, growth of a country's comprehensive power such as science and

Table 7. Developmentalist and post-materialist attitudes in the 2013 Hong Kong and 2012 China World Values Surveys.

Ideological frameworks	Items	Proportion of those who believe the item is the most important or second most important for a country's future (%)	
		HK	China
Developmentalism	Having a high level of economic growth	52.1	77.1
	Maintaining order in the nation	31.1	62.4
	Fighting rising prices	41.2	75.3
	Having a stable economy	52.1	68.2
Post-materialism	Protecting freedom of speech	58.0	14.1
	People having more say in important government decisions	51.3	37.7
	Progressing towards a less impersonal and more humane society	63.9	54.7
	Progressing towards a society in which ideas count more than money	43.7	35.9

Source: "World Values Survey Program", http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp (assessed 23 November 2018).

Table 8. Attitudes about China's economic achievements and sociopolitic problems.

		Per cent (%) *N* (HK) = 499, *N* (GZ) = 268			*T*-Test
		SA/A	SD/D	DK/missing	(HK-GZ)
Economic development should mostly be attributed to the Chinese government.	HK	30.06	29.86	40.08	−0.90***
	GZ	80.60	6.72	12.69	
Scientific and technological achievement should mostly be attributed to the Chinese government.	HK	45.69	15.63	38.68	−0.36***
	GZ	67.16	10.45	22.39	
Social unfairness should mostly be attributed to the political institutions.	HK	84.37	3.81	11.82	0.38***
	GZ	76.87	9.70	13.43	
Social unfairness should mostly be attributed to comparatively low level of economic development.	HK	30.46	39.28	30.26	−0.41***
	GZ	53.73	27.24	19.03	

Note: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; DK= Don't Know; HK = Hong Kong; GZ = Guangzhou.
***$p < .001$.

technology, should be the primary task for a regime. This result helps explain why pan-economic identity is distinct from sociopolitical identity in Hong Kong, whereas the two co-vary in the mainland. This suggests that due to a post-materialist value orientation,

China's economic rise may not be easily translated into a stronger political identity, and worse yet, that the Chinese state's reckless development measures that disregard the environment may only incur disapproval.

This post-materialist mentality has also constrained Hong Kong students from viewing China's economic growth as a solution to its social ills. In discussing China's sociopolitical ills, our interviewees are likely to blame its authoritarian political system, which restricts people from voicing their needs. A few attribute the problems to mainland China's comparative backwardness in economic development, which inhibits proper supply of social services for all members of society. The follow-up survey in Hong Kong shows that 84 per cent of the Hong Kong respondents agree that "China's social unfairness should mostly be attributed to the illness in the Chinese political institutions," whereas only 30 per cent of respondents believe that "China's social unfairness should mostly be attributed to China's comparatively lower level of economic development." However, more than half of the mainland respondents agree with the latter statement (see Table 8). Although they also believe that the Chinese political institutions are responsible for social unfairness, they are more likely than Hong Kong students to believe that current social imperfections are caused by China's economic underdevelopment and therefore can be corrected through economic progress. Economic growth, therefore, carries optimism for a fairer society. However, such optimism does not prevail among the Hong Kong students, who believe that economic growth, even if it is strong, cannot effectively ameliorate the current social problems in China. The differences show that the authoritarian Chinese state's official propaganda hold obvious impact upon the Chinese students but negligible influence upon the Hong Kong students, due to Hong Kong's semi-democratic system in which though free election is restricted the mass media environment is relatively free (Overholt, 2001). More importantly, they explain why pan-economic and sociopolitical identities are separate in Hong Kong and China's economic rise does not strengthen the Hong Kong students' sociopolitical identity with China.

That said, however, we do not suggest that Hong Kong is a highly post-materialist society or the Hong Kong youth resisted China's influence only for value differences. Although well-developed and highly wealthy, the Hong Kong society is deeply divided in personal income and family wealth. Its GINI coefficient is among the highest in the world and poverty is an obvious problem among the bottom class, and the young generation also has to face soaring housing prices (Peng, 2019). Some literature argues that the youth are in fact striving for better material life in the name of democracy (Forrest and Xian, 2018). While this is true, our findings also show that the youth' separatist tendencies are not only driven by desire for better financial well-being, but also their post-materialist dreams.

Robustness Test

In this study, we use data from two Hong Kong surveys to explain why separatist tendencies in Hong Kong have grown despite China's economic rise. By the first survey, we find that the disjunction between sociopolitical and pan-economic identity is crucial for explaining rising separatist tendencies. We then conduct the second survey measuring

Table 9. MGCFA fit indexes across two Hong Kong samples.

Model	S-Bχ^2	*df*	ΔS-Bχ^2	Δdf	TLI	CFI	AIC	RMSEA (90% CI)
Configural	365.278	84			.914	.934	33615.820	.069 (.061, .078)
Metric	389.611	93	17.075	9	.920	.932	33622.151	.067 (.059, .075)

Note: In the configural and metric model, if TLI > .9, CFI > .9, RMSEA < .8, the model can be considered as fitting the data (Browne and Cudeck, 1992; Medsker et al., 1994). S-Bχ^2 = Satorra–Bentler Scaled Chi Square; TLI = Tucker–Lewis index; CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

the Hong Kong students' attitudes towards China's economic achievements and sociopolitical problems and use the results to infer the finding from the first survey. However, if the samples of the two surveys do not match, the analysis based on the second sample cannot be generalisable to the findings in the first survey. To test whether there is such a matching problem, we use multi-group confirmatory factor analysis (MGCFA) to examine whether the two samples share the same national identity structure. Since the attitude data obtained in the second sample are mainly used to explain the national identity structure found in the first sample, whether the two shares the same national identity structure is the key.

We conduct the MGCFA in three steps. The first is a configural invariance test, which examines whether the sample pattern of fixed and free loadings in the factor loading matrix holds for the two samples. As Table 9 shows, the results of the configural model show a satisfactory fit (TLI = .914, CFI = .934, RMSEA = .069). As Figure 3 shows, the same configuration of loadings of the indicators of factors is observed in the two samples. The second step is to examine whether the two have metric invariance, that is, that not only is the pattern of fixed and free parameters the same across the group but the parameters that estimate themselves are equal or numerically identical across the two samples (Chen, 2007). As Table 9 shows, the results of the metric model show a good fit (TLI = .920, CFI = .932, RMSEA = .067). The last step is to compare the less restricted configural model and the more restricted metric model, and their difference is not significant (ΔTLI = .006 and ΔCFI = .002, $p < .01$), indicating that the national identity structure should be fully invariant across the two samples. Thus, analysis and conclusions based on the second sample should be generalisable to the first sample.

As a robustness test for the basic regression results (Table 5), we merge "Chinese Hongkonger" and "Hong Kong Chinese" into a single group and examine how "Hongkonger" ($Y = y_1$) and "Chinese" ($Y = y_2$) differ from "Chinese Hongkongers/ Hong Kong Chinese" ($Y = y_0$) in the three national identity dimensions. The latter two categories suggest a mixture of the Chinese and Hongkonger identity, and if this group should show stronger pan-economic identity than "Hongkongers" but weaker sociopolitical identity than "Chinese", our previous results are robust. As Table 10 shows, the coefficient of pan-economic identity is significantly negative for "Hongkongers" ($\beta = -.411$, $p < .01$), while the coefficient of sociopolitical identity is significantly positive for "Chinese" ($\beta = -.441$, $p < .01$). These results, thus, confirm that our results in Table 5 are robust.

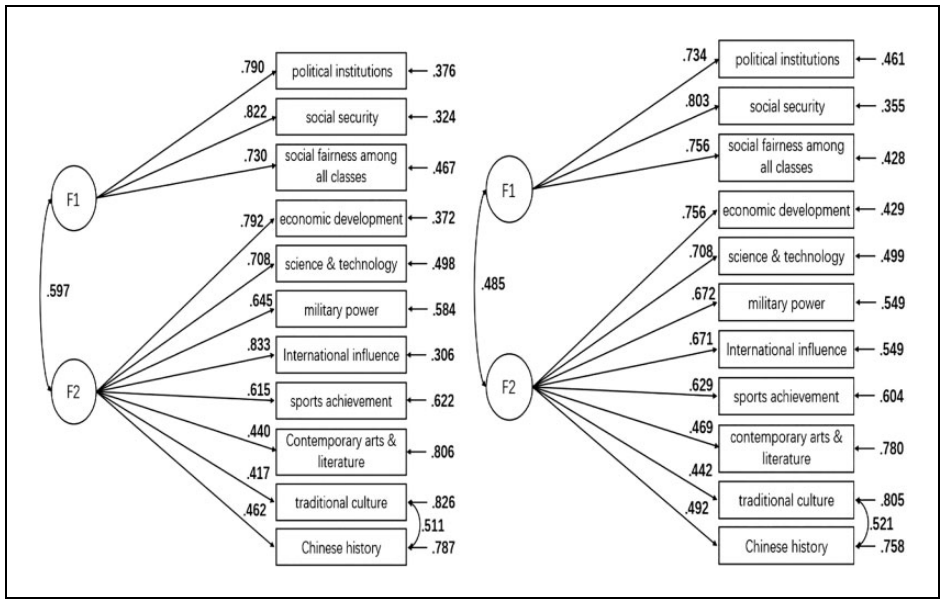

Figure 3. The metric structural model of the two Hong Kong samples. The left is for the first Hong Kong sample, and the right is for the second. The number to the left of each rectangle is the standardised factor loading, while the number to the right is the residual variance.

Table 10. The mlogit regression models for separatist tendencies (robustness test).

	Hongkonger	Chinese
Gender	0.176 (0.217)	0.228 (0.306)
Age	−0.184 (0.167)	0.045 (0.226)
Education degree	0.131 (0.150)	0.298 (0.217)
Income	0.043 (0.166)	−0.020 (0.227)
Foreign products consumption	−0.001 (0.103)	0.109 (0.138)
English proficiency	0.005 (0.120)	−0.390** (0.165)
Pan-economic identity	**−0.411*** (0.138)	**0.112** (0.195)
Cultural identity	−0.217* (0.122)	0.147 (0.176)
Sociopolitical identity	**0.087** (0.108)	**0.441*** (0.138)
Constant	3.143*** (0.822)	−3.285*** (1.196)
Observations	542	542

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

Concluding Remarks

This article seeks to understand why Hong Kong youth's separatist tendencies have grown despite China's growing economic attractiveness. It extends the existing literature

concerning Hong Kong's national identity and China–Hong Kong relations in the following ways. First, it makes a systematic comparison between three dimensions of national identities between Hong Kong and the mainland college students and shows that Hong Kong's pan-economic dimension is comparatively strong but that the sociopolitical and cultural dimensions are relatively weak. The scholarship addressing national identity in Hong Kong is rich; nevertheless, most studies tend to focus on Hong Kong alone and fail to engage in comparison, particularly with mainland China, and this often leads to difficulties in determining the strength of Hong Kong's national identity.

Second, this study introduces a previously under-examined but increasingly significant national identity dimension: pan-economic identity. The previous scholarship tends to focus on either Hong Kong citizens' identification with cultural China or their disapproval of political China. With China's continued economic rise, pan-economic identity is of increasing importance in terms of affecting Hong Kong citizens' overall perception of China, although it will not necessarily mitigate their separatist tendencies. This study finds that the Hong Kong students' pan-economic identity can help explain the differences between the extremists and moderates within Hong Kong's separatist groups.

Third, it develops the concept of "separatist tendencies" which is different from general separatism. "Separatist tendencies" are indicative of the propensity to distance oneself from a larger group psychologically but do not resort to secessionist moves in seeking absolute political independence for various reasons. Defensive in nature, separatist tendencies strongly resist economic, social, and political assimilation by mainland China. This study also shows that the Hong Kong students' separatist tendencies are primarily related to their extremely weak sociopolitical identity but *not* related to the students' cultural identity. This conclusion is different from the existing literature arguing that the cultural differences between China and Hong Kong are sources for anti-China sentiments.

Fourth, this study provides a new ideological approach in explaining Hong Kong's separatist tendencies and thus contributes to a broader understanding regarding how China's economic rise affects its relations with Hong Kong. The recent scholarship concerning China and Hong Kong relations focuses on discussing the two seemingly contradictory trends: China and Hong Kong's increasing socio-economic integration (Shen, 2014), on the one hand, and their rising conflicts, on the other hand. Existing literature, for example, documents both macro-level elite conflicts and societal confrontations between the two places (Fong, 2014; Hung, 2012; Lau and Kuan, 2002; Lo, 2013; Ma, 2007, 2011, 2015) and micro-level Hong Kong citizens' changing attitudes towards China such as their declining national identity and political trust (Chan and Chan, 2014; Fung, 2001; Kim and Ng, 2008; Lee and Chan, 2005; Mathews et al., 2008; Yew and Kwong, 2014). In explaining the two contradictory trends, current scholarship concentrates on the unequal distribution of economic integration benefits among different social classes in Hong Kong and a widespread sense among the public that the Chinese streaming into Hong Kong have stolen their public resources (Zheng and Wan, 2013). This study examines the issue from an ideological perspective, that is, the Hong Kong public, particularly the young, take a post-materialist attitude in perceiving China's economic growth and sociopolitics. The Hong Kong students are much less likely to

ascribe China's economic rise to the Chinese state or to believe that economic development can bring a better sociopolitical future for China. Their perception of China's economic rise has not strengthened their sociopolitical identity with China, nor has it assuaged their apprehension for possible sociopolitical conflicts between the two places. In other words, China's economic power is unable to provide a sociopolitical model that gratifies the Hong Kong students' rising post-materialist expectations. Such political value differences can also account for the anti-China sentiments embodied in the 2019 anti-extradition bill protests, which originate clearly from their distrust in the Chinese political and judicial system.

Such ideological differences, aside from being affected by different economic development stages in the two societies, are closely related with their distinctive political systems. In China, the authoritarian state can cultivate its preferred materialist mentality among its young citizens by its monopoly of education and mass media. However, in Hong Kong's semi-democratic system where the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government has very limited control over education and mass media, the young generation's political values and outlook tend to be more diversified and can be shaped by various sources including the post-materialist Western media. This suggests that the economic achievement in an authoritarian system may be seen and interpreted from different angles in a comparatively more diversified semi-democratic or democratic society.

This finding has strong implications for China's future relations with Hong Kong and, to some extent, with other peripheral societies such as Taiwan. It implies that China faces serious difficulties in transferring its economic strength into an assimilating power for societies where post-materialist value orientations rise or even dominate. The recent scholarship concerning the China–Taiwan relationship also suggests that China's rising economic power has not been translated into sociopolitical attraction for the Taiwanese citizens (Brown, 2004; Welsh and Chang, 2015; Wu, 2007; Wachman, 1994). People with post-materialist values in democratic societies may not appreciate China's economic strength, instead, viewing it as a threat to their own sociopolitical model. In fact, our interviews with Hong Kong students suggest that their perception of China's rise could possibly turn into fear and apprehension that a powerful China may destroy their current life, particularly after the perceived economic benefits from integration with China have been exhausted. Many interviewees now believe that mainland China's economic growth, particularly the rising purchasing power of mainland citizens, has brought more disadvantages than benefits to Hong Kong. The greater that China's economic strength is, the more destructive China will be perceived in relation to the current sociopolitical order and the stronger the resistance may be in places such as Hong Kong.

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Appendix 1

Table 1A. Sample statistics for the 2015 Guangzhou and Hong Kong surveys.

		Mean	
Variable	Description	GZ	HK
Gender	Male = 0, female = 1.	0.56	0.48
Age	1–4 mean the age is "18 and below," "19–22," "23–28," and "29 and above," respectively.	–	1.85
Nationality	Han nationality = 0, minority nationalities = 1.	0.07	–
Education level	GZ: 1–4 mean "freshman," "sophomore," "junior," and "senior," respectively. HK: 1–4 means "associate degree," "undergraduate," "graduate," and "other," respectively.	1.92	1.99
Family income	GZ: 1–4 mean "4,000 RMB and below," "4,001–8,000 RMB," "8,001–12,000 RMB," and "above 12,000 RMB," respectively. HK: 1–4 mean "below 15,000 HKD," "15,000–22,000 HKD," "22,000–50,000 HKD," and "above 50,000 HKD," respectively.	2.43	2.53
Political membership	CCP = 3, CCYL = 2, Others = 1.	2.04	–
English proficiency	1–5 mean "very poor," "poor," "common," "fair," and "very good," respectively.	–	3.64

Note: HK = Hong Kong; GZ = Guangzhou.